



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

TODD P. GRAVES

Contact Don Ledford, Public Affairs • (816) 426-4220 • 400 East Ninth Street, Room 5510 • Kansas City, MO 64106

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UPDATE: PROJECT CEASEFIRE
**HARRISONVILLE MAN SENTENCED, KC MAN PLEADS GUILTY
TO ILLEGAL FIREARM POSSESSION**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Harrisonville, Mo., man was sentenced and a Kansas City, Mo., man pleaded guilty in federal court today, in separate and unrelated cases, for being felons in possession of firearms.

* **Walter E. Richardson**, 55, of Harrisonville, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Gary A. Fenner this morning to three years and one month in federal prison without parole.

On March 24, 2005, **Richardson** pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of three firearms. By pleading guilty, **Richardson** admitted that he was in possession of a Glock .40-caliber semi-automatic pistol, a Smith and Wesson 12-gauge shotgun and a Romarm/Cugir rifle on Nov. 15, 2004. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for any felon to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Richardson** has two 1995 criminal felony convictions for driving while intoxicated and unlawful use of a weapon and a 1996 criminal felony conviction for driving while intoxicated.

Richardson also pleaded guilty to illegally acquiring the Romarm/Cugir firearm. By pleading guilty, **Richardson** admitted that when he acquired the firearm he represented that he had not previously been convicted of a felony, when in fact he had three prior criminal felony convictions, Graves said.

Richardson was originally charged in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on Dec. 15, 2004, in Kansas City. **Richardson** pleaded guilty to charges contained in a two-count superseding indictment that was later returned by a federal grand jury on Feb. 10, 2005.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jess E. Michaelson. It was

investigated by the Lee's Summit, Mo., Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

* **Celon S. Stokes**, 33, of Kansas City, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Fernando J. Gaitan this morning to being a felon in possession of a firearm.

By pleading guilty, **Stokes** admitted that he was in possession of a Cal Accu-Tek .380-caliber pistol on Dec. 1, 2004. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for any felon to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Stokes** has 1990 criminal felony convictions for carrying a concealed weapon, being a felon in possession of a firearm and battery on a law enforcement officer, a 1994 criminal felony conviction for armed trafficking in cocaine, a 1991 criminal felony conviction for possession with intent to deliver cocaine and a 1990 criminal felony conviction for possession of cocaine.

Under federal statutes, Graves explained, **Stokes** may be subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years in federal prison without parole, up to life in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$250,000, based on his prior criminal felony convictions.

Stokes was originally charged in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on March 30, 2005.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul S. Becker. It was investigated by the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department, the United States Marshal's Service and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Project Ceasefire

Project Ceasefire, launched in October 1999, is a cooperative initiative by federal and local law enforcement and the Kansas City Crime Commission that targets for federal prosecution persons who unlawfully use or possess firearms.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow